

# Mimulus Memo

California Native Plant Society — Kern County Chapter  
July-August 2008

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I have just  
returned from an  
uplifting Chapter

Council meeting in

historic Coloma. We had our meeting in the second oldest BPOE building in the state, built in the 1850s. Many of us camped in Lotus along the American River with all of the rafters, Girl Scouts (lots of Kum Ba Yah), and a wedding party complete with *papel pico* and joyous music until 10pm. I had never camped on watered and mown lawn before! Nor had I ever camped where the noise stopped precisely at 10 for quiet hours!

The morning contained all of the business of our organization, and was full of reports. We got bad news, as our Executive Director, Amanda Jorgensen is leaving us, causing a chorus of groans and moans. Her husband received a promotion to Washington, DC. She will stay though our Conservation Conference in January. The good news is that the Conference, entitled Strategies and Solutions, which everyone in Sacramento has been working so hard on, is going very well. Many grants have been written and received, although if any of us have spare dollars, we are urged to send them to CNPS for student scholarships so aspiring Botanists can attend. Members may volunteer at the Conference and receive a reduced rate, also. This is the first scientific conference CNPS has held in 20 or so years, and I hope many of us can car pool to Sacramento to attend. Look on [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) for the exciting speakers and other information.

The afternoon was split by various groups that

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## WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Audrey Cochran  
Dorie Giragosian  
Susan DeGaia

## KERN CNPS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President	Debby Kroeger
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Secretary	Laura Stockton

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### DID YOU KNOW

that you can renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card? As an option, you can set it up to renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, convenient, and reduces the cost of mailing renewal notices.

[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

Click on the JOIN button

we could choose to attend. I choose the Membership and the Legislation groups. It is so helpful to hear others relate their successes, and find out what our Lobbyist (a North HS and UC Davis graduate!) thinks we need to know and act on.

Saturday night after dinner, a geologist spoke on Serpentine soils, and Sunday morning we gathered for a spectacular field trip to a nearby reserve to see plants that have adapted to this soil. It was an enjoyable and educational weekend for me. I came home recharged and ready to work on the business of our Kern Chapter.

The next CC meeting will be held the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> of September in Santa Rosa. If anyone is interested in going please let me know.

Enjoy your summer!

LUCY CLARK

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## **THANK YOU!**

**Yvonne Turkal** - for coordinating the MIMULUS MEMO e-mail list and calendar

**Marya Miller and Darrell Barnes, Karen Meeks, and Debby Kroeger** - for delivering our educational table materials to CALM and back

**Karen Meeks, Debby Kroeger, and Lucy Clark** - for hosting the educational table at CALM's 25<sup>th</sup> Birthday

**Fletcher Linton** - for the beautiful program on the plants of the Anza Borrego State Park

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## **Mourning Cloak Gardens Field Trip**

by Dorie Giragosian

The field trip to Mourning Cloak Botanical Gardens in Tehachapi, was the first I had been on with the Native Plant Society, and I had a really good time. We were met in the parking lot by the new owner of the Gardens. Boy, does she have her work cut out for her.

The property wraps up a gentle hill for quite a few acres, and the land has paths wandering through the different planted areas. The first we saw, next to the parking area was referred to as the rose garden. It was filled with many different varieties of roses, old and new, climbing and mini, and most had careful labels below the plants. There was a row of tall arches, with climbing roses trained over the tops. Rising among the roses were several huge old oak trees. We marveled at how old they must be.

As we walked on, we crossed the driveway and saw the path start up the hill. The first area we came to had many trees. When we couldn't find name tags, it was fun to see if any of us recognized them, and I was fascinated to see that we could name quite a few. I watched as the others made notes on, and took pictures of, what they saw, so they could look them up later. After a while, we came to an area set up for small picnics, with several tables and benches. We sat down, had snacks, and rested for a while.

When we continued, we walked further up the path, seeing what was around each curve. There was a shade garden, lighted by the variegated colors of leaves, and flowers. Another section had more sunlight, and was lush with large beds of flowers. About half way up the hill, we came across a large pond and (small) waterfall, with foot-long multi-colored koi/carp, swimming among the water lilies. We discovered a carved face attached to one of the trees near the entrance to the pond. It was gnome-like, and made us laugh. The garden made me



feel like we were kids discovering the different areas for the first time. We crossed a small bridge across a dry creek bed, and saw that it, too, was planted with appropriate reeds and flowers for that type of terrain.

One area, near the top of the property, had cactus and succulents as its focus. As before, most were labeled with both the botanical and common names. There were statues placed throughout the beds. Most of these were made of concrete or stone. There were so many ideas for things to try at home.

As we wound our way down the other side of the garden, we continued to see new areas to explore. There was an area with a barn, sheds, and antique carts and wagons. Next to that, was the vegetable garden and fruit tree areas. They were bordered with wooden fences, and made me envious of their order and discipline. We continued in the vegetable garden, and as we came out through fence, we were once again in the parking lot and ready to return to Bakersfield. The day was fun, with exercise and plenty of interesting plants!

## More About Mourning Cloak...

**June 14 was our Kern Native Plant Field Trip to the Mourning Cloak Botanical Gardens** in Tehachapi. We had a great time admiring and taking in the fragrance of the beautiful Rose Garden that also housed an almost 500-year-old Valley Oak tree.



Karen Meeks and Dorie Giragosian sat beside the Koi pond, to enjoy the serenity - to say nothing of taking a break from walking the many trails.



While walking among the trees, Dorie, explained how her landscape architect taught her to identify an Alder. If the area where the tree limbs have been removed looks like an eye, then it is an Alder. What do you think?



We also had a companion follow us to make sure we didn't get into any trouble. After all it WAS HIS HOUSE OR was he playing Snoopy the flying ace and we were his enemy.

Don & Yvonne Turkal



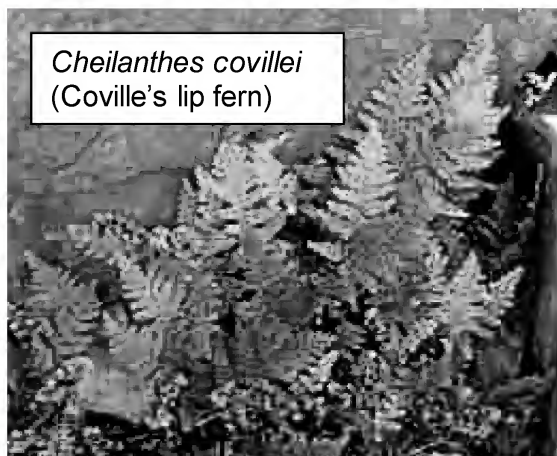
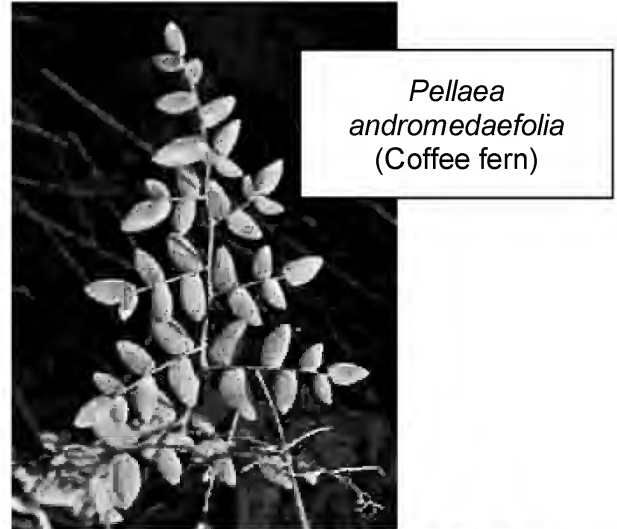
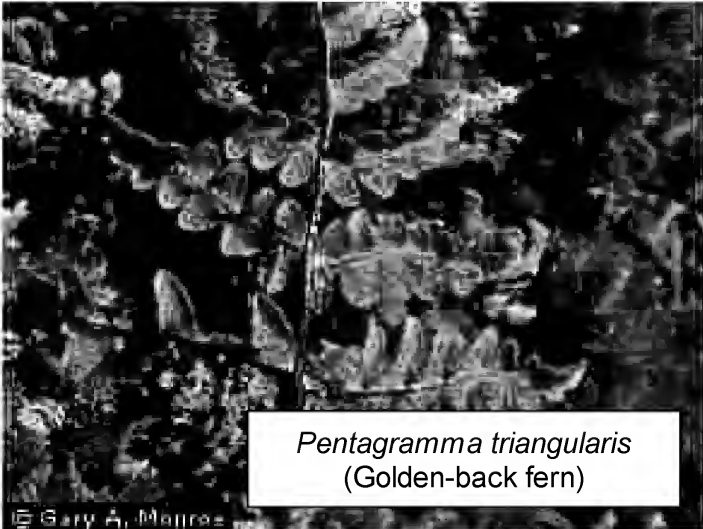
# Fern Field Trip to Johnsondale

May 3, 2008

by Don and Yvonne Turkal

We had such a great field trip with David Schwartz, our April program presenter and member of our Kern Chapter. Clyde Golden, Lucy Clark, and the two of us had a wonderful personal tour of these beautiful xeric ferns. We knew very little about xeric ferns, but thanks to David, we are now paying more attention to granite and limestone rock formations where these guys hang out.

Here are just a few of the gems we saw.



## Is That A Weed?

“A weed is a plant that is not only in the wrong place, but intends to stay” - Sara Stein

Near the end of May, I received the following emails from Dr. Ted Murphy, who was wondering about an unusual plant the came up in his vegetable garden. I referred the matter to Stephen, and it was soon identified:

**Ted Murphy:** I just renovated my flower/vegetable bed in the back yard and took a long time to get to planting it.

In the meantime, a plant emerged which I took to be a watermelon and presumed our Scrub Jay had planted them (a total of 3 in two locations). When it developed huge spines, I had second thoughts. I believe it is a Citron or Bitter Apple. Can you tell me which or what? Thanks. Hope you have a good summer.

**Linda:** I have sent your pictures on to Stephen.....I am sure he will know what it is! I have seen this plant before but do not know the name. It looks like it belongs in the Solanaceae, which would make it more like a tomato relative.... I will let you know what I find out!

**Ted:** Linda - So far the plant is an 18" upright form which is not a gourd habit – never thought of a Solanaceae species. It is a very pretty plant with half-inch stickers! Sp I think it will be deleted as soon as I learn its identity. Thanks.

**Stephen:** I'm pretty sure it is Buffalobur. I had one of these come up last year in a walkway, it's leaves look like a watermelon's but this plant is a nightshade (Solanum)

**Ted:** Buffalobur it is! I will get rid of it tomorrow - although it is an attractive plant, save for the spines. Thanks.



So there you have it! If there is an unusual, unidentified, WEEDY plant in your yard or just out in a field somewhere, send us an email and photos and we will try our hardest to identify it for you.

Thanks, Linda Cooley.

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## KERN CNPS EVENTS

Summer Break July and August

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## Acorns and Eat'em Online Book

by Suellen Ocean

“I don’t know why more people don’t eat acorns. Perhaps myths about them exist, and they’ve never been dispelled. I absolutely love them. Through the process of writing this book, I cooked a lot of acorns. Friends and family loved the recipes. The majority of “first-time-tasters” were surprised at how delicious they are...”

To read more about collecting and eating acorns, download this book at:  
[http://www.californiaoaks.org/ExtAssets/acorns\\_and\\_eatem.pdf](http://www.californiaoaks.org/ExtAssets/acorns_and_eatem.pdf)

## **Climate change threatens two-thirds of California's unique plants, study says**

By Margot Roosevelt, Los Angeles Times Staff Writer  
(from the Wednesday, June 25, 2008 Los Angeles Times)

The state's plants are at risk of collapse unless they migrate or are moved to refuges, scientists say. Animals may also be separated from plants on which they depend, according to researchers.

Read the article at:

<http://www.latimes.com/news/la-me-species25-2008jun25,0,6687902.story?track=ntothtml>

“If you violate Nature's laws  
you are your own  
prosecuting attorney, judge,  
jury, and hangman.”  
- Luther Burbank

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CNPS – Kern County Chapter

% Stephen Cooley, Editor

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The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.